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**Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives**

July 21, 2009

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**BLUE DOG COALITION**

The Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**1254**

Re: *A National Broadband Plan for Our Future*, GN Docket No. 09-51

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I write to submit my comments about my concerns with the level of minority participation in the development and implementation of a national broadband plan. A sound and strategic plan is essential to ensuring an effective and accessible broadband service is available for all minority and low-income communities.

Access to broadband is especially important for Hispanic communities as it continues to grow in influence and purchasing power. There are now 2.5 million Hispanic-owned businesses in the United States, which generates up to 400 million in gross receipts. However, a slow adaptation of new technologies and moreover, a significant barriers to accessible broadband services continue to hold back and impeded further economic growth. In 2007, the Census reported that 35% of Latino households subscribed to broadband, compared to 69% of Asian households and 55% of White Non-Hispanic households. The ability for any community to share large amounts of data over long distances in mere seconds can exponentially increase the available opportunities for business, education, and civic engagement.

Therefore, I request that as a comprehensive and strategic plan is laid out, the following proposals be taken into consideration:

***Creation of accessible and affordable broadband options:***

The communities in greatest need are those that are low-income, minority and multi-cultural in rural, suburban and urban parts of America, all who across the board are facing the toughest consequences of the current economic recession. Providing an accessible and affordable broadband adoption to these communities will exponentially alleviate the digital divide and increase the economic growth of these communities. Furthermore, to ensure affordability of broadband options, the service options made available need to be tailored to meet the needs and



means of these communities; this includes adjusted initial customer and equipment deposits. Specific focus on low-income and minority communities is strongly encouraged given the historical low priority received by these communities for the deployment of new technologies.

***Broadband availability and adoption educational campaigns***

All broadband deployment and adoption policies need to include strategic uses of broadband availability and adoption educational campaigns for low-income, minority communities. These targeted communities must be informed of the availability of service options, the benefits of their use, and how to find practicable and accessible uses of these options. Such targeted efforts may include special emphasis on schools and health care centers; areas in a community that can greatly benefit from increased wise technology investment and adequate preparation to use these technologies by their employees.

***Accurate Broadband mapping with correlated social indicators***

To ensure proper progress measurements and to identify areas of greatest need, a multi functional mapping of all broadband accessibility and adoption is needed. In addition to the technical indicators of broadband availability, speed of connection, competitive pricing, etc, such mappings may include indicators of poverty, income, ethnicity, housing, healthcare providers, schools, churches, local government, etc.. Such measures will assist in identifying areas of immediate need and in the monitoring of emerging technologies.

***Market entrance opportunities for Minority-owned business***

Minority-owned businesses rising economic presence in the United States, and coupled with the rise in the minority population's purchasing power, are key elements in the successful broadband deployment. The entrance of these businesses will increase competition and create more minority-held jobs. Current unemployment statistics for minorities are rising at historic levels, in allowing a participation increase of minority-owned businesses; we may lower these alarming statistics.

Only through a comprehensive broadband policy, with a focus on minority and low-income communities, can we successfully ensure access to broadband for everyone.

Respectfully Submitted,



JOE BACA  
Member of Congress



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 25, 2009

The Honorable Joe Baca  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2245 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Baca:

Thank you for your July 21, 2009 letter regarding the level of minority participation in the development and implementation of the national broadband plan. As you note, certain communities have greater challenges in gaining access to broadband services than other communities. I agree that accessible, affordable broadband is critical to economic growth and educational opportunity, especially for low-income and minority communities. Congress assigned the Commission the important task of developing a national broadband plan to ensure broadband access for *all* Americans, regardless of race, income, or location. Our approach to this plan will be innovative, pragmatic, and data-driven, leaving no idea untested.

The Commission initiated the process of developing this national broadband plan by issuing a *Notice of Inquiry* in April, and we have received thousands of comments in response from a wide and diverse group of citizens, organizations, and industry participants, including numerous minority interest organizations. Included in the Commission's *Notice* and the public record are many of the ideas you recommend, including affordability programs for low-income and minority communities, digital literacy campaigns, multi-layered broadband mapping, and special considerations for minority-owned businesses. During August, the Commission held almost two dozen public workshops on discrete aspects of the plan, and over the next few months we will host a broader national discussion around the country and online. Obtaining input from all stakeholders is extremely valuable, and the process will be one of the most open and participatory processes ever undertaken by the Commission.

I appreciate your views on this matter, and I will make your letter a part of the record in the Commission's open docket regarding development of the national broadband plan. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski  
Chairman